



To: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, ACF, HHS

From: Casey Family Programs

Date: September 30, 2022

Re: Proposed Information Collection Activity: Evaluation of LifeSet

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in response to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) proposal for additional information collection activities to assess the implementation of LifeSet, a program that provides services and supports to young adults ages 17 to 21 with previous child welfare involvement.

Casey Family Programs (Casey) was founded in 1966 and is the nation's largest operating foundation focused on providing and improving – and ultimately preventing the need for – foster care. Casey's perspectives are informed by our own experiences working with child welfare agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and with 16 American Indian tribal nations on child welfare policies and practices to improve outcomes for children and families. Casey partners with child welfare systems, policymakers, youth and families, community organizations, national partners, philanthropy, American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, and courts to support practices and policies that increase the safety and success of children and strengthen the resilience of families.

ACF's information collection activities are part of a larger project intended to contribute to evidence-building in child welfare and help to determine the effectiveness of programs for youth formerly in foster care on young adult outcomes. We commend ACF for its focus on improving outcomes for this vulnerable population and based on what we have learned in our work with children, youth, families, and communities across the country, we offer the following brief points for consideration.

Child welfare service providers use evidence-based practices to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, youth, and families. The use of data, research, and evaluation to inform practice and decision-making is critical, however, the lack of available evidence about specific child welfare practices and programs is a barrier to widespread implementation of evidence-based practice. This is a key area, where relatively few rigorous studies have been conducted.

LifeSet is a federally funded program and as such, we recommend the following: (1) incorporate an outcome study component; (2) include in the outcome evaluation a follow-up study of the youth served to ensure the intervention can be considered as an evidence-based practice eligible for recognition by the Title IV-E Clearinghouse; and (3) Require that an advisory committee of foster care alumni and foster parents be formed to help guide the study design, review of initial data, and dissemination of the findings.

Casey Family Programs appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed information collection. If you have questions or require further information, please contact Christine Calpin, Managing Director, Public Policy (ccalpin@casey.org).